



**For Immediate Release**  
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## **Intel Committee Ranking Member Schiff Opening Statement**

**Washington, DC** – Today, Rep. Adam Schiff (D-CA), the Ranking Member of the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, delivered the following statement during an open HPSCI committee hearing with former Director of the CIA John Brennan.

Below are those remarks (as prepared):

Good morning, Director Brennan welcome, we thank you coming before our committee and for your lifetime of service to the country. We awoke today to the terrible news from Manchester, that a suicide bomber killed and wounded scores of young people, including children enjoying music at a concert. It is difficult to describe the depravity of that act, let alone view the images of the carnage, which has now been claimed by ISIS. We know that your colleagues in the Intelligence Community are doing everything they can to share information with the British, and working day and night to prevent such attacks from again plaguing our own country. We thank them, and the brave servicemen and women fighting this scourge of terror in places like Iraq, Syria and Afghanistan.

Two months ago, our committee held its first open hearing, with then-FBI Director Comey and NSA Director Rogers. Because Mr. Comey was responsible for investigating whether U.S. persons were involved in the Russian hacking of our election, many of our questions at that hearing went to the issue of collusion.

It was at that hearing that Director Comey first revealed the FBI had opened a foreign counter-intelligence investigation of people associated with the Trump campaign in July of last year, and that this investigation was ongoing. Director Comey and Rogers also repudiated the President's contention that he was the subject of an illegal wiretapping operation orchestrated by his predecessor.

Today, we will hear the testimony of former CIA Director John Brennan, who had the responsibility to determine Russia's plans and intentions in the U.S. and around the world. Those plans involved an unprecedented attack on our democratic institutions, and those intentions included a desire to tear down our democracy, and more than that, a wish to undermine the candidacy of Hillary Clinton and advance the prospects that Donald Trump would become President of the United States.

The audacity of the Russian intervention in our election took most Americans by surprise, and today we will look to Director Brennan to inform us when the CIA first learned that the Russians intended to do more than gather foreign intelligence and were intent on weaponizing the data by publishing it at critical times during the campaign.

What accounts for the Russian willingness to interfere in such a brazen way? What were they hoping to accomplish, and why were they willing to run the risk of getting caught? Did the Russians believe that the U.S. government response would be so muted that they could get away with it and pay little price?

Since the decision to intervene in our election came from the top levels of the Kremlin, was Putin, himself, encouraged by then candidate Trump's call for the Russians to hack Hillary Clinton's emails and his promise that they would be richly rewarded for doing so?

While the CIA's mission is to gather foreign intelligence, we will also want to explore with Director Brennan what the agency may have learned about the issue of U.S. person involvement in the Russian operation – and can share in open session – about how the Russians may have identified or targeted U.S. persons to secure their assistance or co-opt them, and what mechanism was established if any, for the sharing of information between elements of the intelligence community and the FBI. Our agencies have concluded that the Russian attack on our democracy was not a one-off, and they will do so again. In fact, the Russians are already employing many of the same tactics in Europe. We will want to know the Director's views of the broader Russian aims, and what we can do to stop them.

Finally, the disruption of our democracy that the Russians sought to provoke continues to reverberate throughout our government. Over the course of the last two weeks, several matters have been alleged that are of grave concern to our committee and the public that have a direct bearing on our investigation and the relationship between the President and the intelligence community.

It is alleged that the President shared sensitive and classified information with the Russians that was provided by one of our intelligence partners. It is alleged that the President urged Director Comey to lay off the investigation of Michael Flynn, and asked the Director to pledge his loyalty. Most recently, it is alleged that the President weighed in with Directors Rogers and Coats and urged them to rebut the issue of collusion, and that his staff asked personnel at those agencies to lobby Director Comey to drop the Flynn case. And significantly, it was admitted by the President, himself, that the Russia probe was the primary motivation behind his firing of Mr. Comey.

If accurate, these events would have taken place shortly after you left the CIA, but as I must imagine you have maintained many relationships with the incredible workforce at the CIA where you served for decades, we will be interested to learn whether members of the intelligence community have shared information with you that corroborates any of these allegations, and how you assess the conduct of the Administration may be impacting the ability of the agencies to gather critical information from our partners, and the ability of the FBI to carry out its investigation free from interference.

And last, I want to say a word about the appointment of Mr. Mueller as special counsel. Many of us have known Director Mueller for many years and have the utmost respect for him. But I take sharp issue with those who have suggested that his appointment, as important as it was to ensure public confidence in the conduct of the DOJ investigation, somehow obviates the need for our own congressional probe.

Our investigation and Mr. Mueller's have two very different, but equally important objects; his will ultimately determine whether any U.S. laws were broken and who should be brought to justice if they were, and ours will determine the whole scope of Russian intervention in which U.S. person involvement is but one part, whether our response was adequate, what steps need to be taken to protect us in the future, and importantly, to make many of our hearings and findings public, since a well-informed electorate is our only sure defense.

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